Joint Basing and Explosives Safety from the US Navy Perspective

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ABSTRACT

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission recommendation 146 requires 26 Department of Defense bases to relocate installation management functions to nearby or co-located installations and create 12 Joint Bases. While the intent of the 2005 BRAC commission was to increase operational efficiency and readiness, and facilitate new ways of doing business, little consideration was given to existing Service explosives safety processes and policies. The institution of Joint Basing has created a significant amount of trepidation by the services as the advent of Joint Basing becomes reality. However, Joint Basing is not a new concept. The United States Navy has been the lead service for Joint Reserve Bases (JRB) such as Naval Air Stations JRB New Orleans and Fort Worth, and has hosted units from other US services conducting training and security exercises to large tenants such as the Crane Army Ammunition Plant at Naval Support Activity Crane. Additionally, US Navy units have been tenants on US Army and US Air Force installations throughout the world. With this paper, the author will highlight the various and inconsistent means by which explosives safety criteria has been applied in these scenarios, and present a construct for consistent application of service specific and DOD explosives safety criteria for not only the large "mega" joint bases in Hawaii, Guam, Georgia, and New Jersey, but the many existing installations where US Navy host-tenant relationships currently exist.

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Introduction

The 2005 Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) commission stipulated in Recommendation 146 that 26 Department of Defense installations relocate management functions to nearby or co-located installations and create 12 Joint Bases. The intent of the 2005 BRAC commission was to increase operational efficiencies and readiness, facilitate new ways of doing business, and to optimize resource requirements. The mandated joint bases are:

Joint Base Lewis-McChord, WA;

Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst, NJ;

Joint Base Andrews- Naval Air Facility Washington, MD;

Joint Base Anacostia-Bolling, D.C.;

Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall, VA;

Joint Base Elmendorf-Richardson, AK;

Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam, HI;

Joint Base Lackland-Sam Houston-Randolph, TX;

Joint Base Charleston, S.C.;

Joint Base Langley-Eustis, VA;

Joint Base Little Creek-Story, VA;

Joint Region Marianas, Guam.

Of the twelve Joint Bases, seven are those where the Navy will be part of the Joint Base construct, either as the Host or Tenant.

Discussion

The purpose of the 2005 BRAC commission was to increase operational efficiencies and readiness, facilitate new ways of doing business, and to optimize resource requirements. This optimization effort was to look at processes and functions that were often duplicated on the same installation or adjacent installations by more than one service. Three of the basic tenets of Joint Bases, as provided in reference (a), are that (1) Joint Basing must maintain services warfighting capabilities; (2) training our warfighters remains a top priority; and (3) Airmen open and operate airfields, and sailors open and operate ports. However, in all of the planning for Joint Bases, there was little or no consideration given to explosives safety. Explosives safety itself is a broad topic which includes site planning, deviations to established explosives safety criteria, inspections, construction, etc. The focus of this paper will be the aspect of explosives safety as it pertains to site planning.

The concept of Joint Bases is not new. All of the services, in one way or the other, have operated joint bases. The major difference with the new construct is that previously established bases/installations will be merged under one central management and infrastructure, whereas the current joint basing scenarios have predominantly been where there is a "host" – "tenant" relationship between one services functional or operating unit and a different host service. The current "joint" environment has typically been accomplished with the host installation service applying their explosives safety criteria for the tenant units during the site planning process. What has not been consistent is the approval review chain for site plans.

For the single major Army operation on a Navy installation, the Crane Army Ammunition Activity (CAAA) which operates on the Naval Support Facility (NSF) Crane, the site plan process for CAAA has been completely run through the Navy process utilizing Naval explosives safety criteria and the Navy review chain. Whereas, Navy units operating on Army installations have typically conducted coordination for their projects requiring explosives safety review with the Army installation explosives safety personnel, then reviewed through the Navy chain to the Naval Ordnance Safety and Security Activity (NOSSA). Upon completion of the technical review at NOSSA, the site plan is forwarded to the U.S. Army Technical Center for Explosives Safety (USATCES). USATCES then either approves the project, if within their scope of

approval, or forwards to the Department of the Defense Explosives Safety Board (DDESB) for approval.

The review scenarios for Air Force units operating on Navy installations and Navy units operating on Air Force installations are slightly different. The Navy has, with two exceptions, conducted reviews of site plans for Air Force tenants exactly the same as those conducted for Army units on Navy installations – application of Naval explosives safety criteria and the use of the Navy review and approval chains. The two exceptions were related to the siting of Air Force bomber units at NSF Diego Garcia, and the siting of Air Force alert squadrons at Naval Air Station (NAS) Joint Reserve Base (JRB) New Orleans and Fort Worth, as well as NAS Lemoore. The siting of the alert squadrons initially required the Navy to coordinate with the Air Force Safety Center (AFSC) for the application of DDESB approved Operation Noble Eagle criteria. Subsequent reviews of Air Force alert sites have applied this specific criteria but without Air Force coordination. The scenario for Navy units operating on Air Force installations has evolved to those site plans being reviewed and approved solely within the Air Force review chain.

Technical Paper 26

As part of an effort to standardize the overall site plan submission process, the DDESB has drafted Technical Paper (TP) 26 (reference (b)) titled "Guidance for Required Explosives Safety Submissions". This guidance predominantly is intended to elaborate on the DDESB Required Explosives Safety Submissions (RESS) requirements outlined in the Department of Defense Instruction 6055.16, reference (c) and DOD 6055.09-STD, reference (d). Further guidance on Joint Basing is provided in Section 2.4.1.2.2 of reference (b). The purpose of this specific guidance is to insure (1) coordination between the host (Lead Service) and tenant (Non-Lead Service); (2) that the respective chains of command are kept informed of project status; and (3) that Master Planning documentation is maintained. It provides recommendations on submission routes that basically has the non-lead service (tenant) routing the site plan submission through the lead service (host) site plan review and approval chains with recommendations that endorsement and approval copies are provided to the non-lead service operating unit and explosives safety service center. This guidance does address the recommendation to keep all

relevant parties informed, but may not provide the appropriate level of coordination between the lead-service and non-lead service review chains.

Proposed NOSSA Recommendation

After careful review of the recommended guidance provided in TP 26 and a review of the known site plan review processes employed by NOSSA and the other services, it is recommended that the current process used by the Navy for Navy tenants (non-lead service) on Army installations be employed for those twelve Joint Bases as provided above. The process requires the complete coordination and approval at the installation level followed by the submission of the site plan through the non-lead review chain to the service's explosives safety office (NOSSA for the Department of the Navy). NOSSA then forwards the submission to the USATCES for either approval or endorsement to the DDESB. This process has worked well for Navy and Army projects at White Sands Missile Range, former Fort Story (now part of Joint Base Little Creek), and Fort A.P. Hill. This will require a change in how the Navy interfaces for Army and Air Force tenants on Navy installations, particularly CAAA at NSF Crane and the Air Force alert squadrons at NAS JRB New Orleans and Ft. Worth. It will also necessitate a change in the submission process for Navy tenants on Air Force installations. This proposed change, which is directly in line with the tenets described in reference (a), will facilitate greater levels of coordination, consistency in submissions between the services and to the DDESB, and trust across service lines. It will also increase efficiencies and lead to better application of the limited resources for the Department of Defense.

Other Relevant Issues

As previously mentioned, this paper only addressed the aspect of site planning on joint bases. Some of the other explosives safety related issues that will need to be evaluated are: (1) Construction Verification (verification of what is constructed and where approved); (2) Acceptance of Risk of encumbered facilities utilized by either the lead or non-lead service; (3) Deviations from explosives safety criteria; (4) Inspections (currently conducted by NOSSA on

Navy installations and Naval units on other service installations); and (5) a proposal to rotate explosives safety personnel between service centers to facilitate not only an understanding of service specific criteria but the need for coordination, consistency, and trust.

Conclusion

The advent of Joint Basing and the need to address the aspect of explosives safety is certainly not without potential problems. However, the fact that the proposed process for site plan review has worked between the Navy and the Army lends credence to the concept. The proposed concept is in concert with Section 2.4.1.2.2 of Reference (b) in that it not only insures coordination between the services, consistency in submissions between the services and to the DDESB, and trust across service lines, but meets the tenets provided in Reference (a) in increasing efficiencies and optimizes the application of resources.

References

(a) Joint Memorandum for Distribution between the Chief of Naval Operations and Chief of Staff of the Air Force (AF/Navy Joint Basing Tenets);

(b) Draft DDESB Technical Paper 26 (Subj: Guidance for Required Explosives Safety Submissions);

(c) Department of Defense Instruction 6055.16, "Explosives Safety Management Program," July 29, 2008;

(d) DoD 6055.09-STD, "Department of Defense (DoD) Ammunition and Explosives Safety Standards," Change 2, August 21, 2009.

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Department of the Navy
Naval Ordnance Safety & Security Activity
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Department of the Navy
Construct For Joint Basing – Explosives Safety

Gary A. Hogue

13 July 2010

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Introduction

- ✓ 2005 BRAC Commission Recommendation 146
- ✓ Current Joint Basing
- ✓ Proposed DDESB TP-26
- ✓ DON Recommendations
- ✓ Other Issues???

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Purpose

- ✓ Increase Operational Efficiencies & Readiness
- ✓ Facilitate New Business Processes
- ✓ Optimize Resources

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AF/Navy Joint Basing Tenets

- ✓ **Must Maintain Service Warfighting Capabilities**
- ✓ **Training of Warfighters Remains Top Priority**
- ✓ **Airmen Open and Operate Airfields & Sailors Open and Operate Ports**

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Impact

- ✓ No Consideration For Explosives Safety
- ✓ Services Left to Define

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Current Process (es)

- ✓ Navy Units on Army Installations:
  - White Sands Missile Range
  - Fort Story
  - Fort A.P. Hill

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Current Process (es)

- ✓ Navy Units on Air Force Installations:
  - NAVSCOLEOD Eglin AFB
  - Misawa AFB
  - Kadena AFB
  - Andersen AFB

Navy Unit/ Installation ES → **Air Force Review Chain** → **AFSC to DDESB**

Current Process (es)

- ✓ Army Units on Navy Installations:
  - CAAA at NAVSUPPACT Crane, In

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Current Process (es)

- ✓ Air Force Units on Navy Installations:
  - NAS JRB New Orleans
  - NAS JRB Fort Worth
  - NAVSUPPFAC Diego Garcia

Air Force Unit/ Installation ES → **Navy Review Chain** → **NOSSA to DDESB**

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Mandated Alignments

- ✓ Joint Base Pearl Harbor-Hickam
- ✓ Joint Region Marianas
- ✓ Joint Base Charleston
- ✓ Joint Base McGuire-Dix-Lakehurst
- ✓ Joint Expeditionary Base Little Creek-Fort Story

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Draft Technical Paper 26

- **Para: 2.4.1.2.2.** "The key is ensuring that involved Military Service units accomplish appropriate coordination, keep all chains-of-command/review chains informed, and maintain master planning documentation."

- **Non-Lead Service Submissions routed through Lead-Services Explosives Safety Submission Chain**

- **Exposure by Lead Service Submissions of Non-Lead Service Military Unit Requires Acknowledgement/Concurrence of Exposure/Risk**

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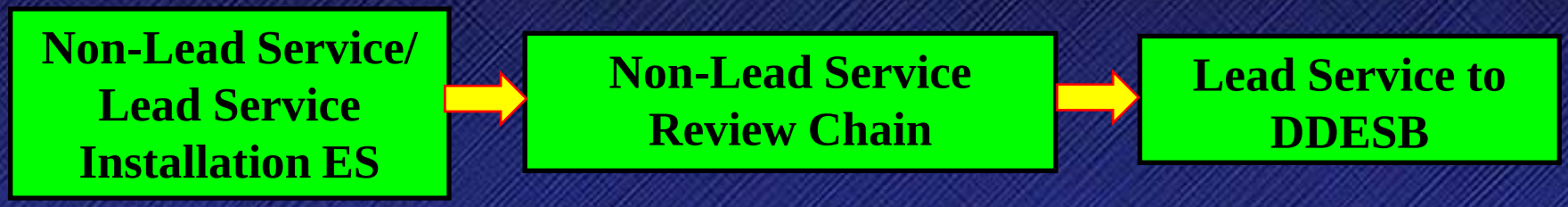
Proposed DON Process



- ✓ **Expected Benefits:**
  - **Continued Mission Capability**
  - **Complete Visibility of RESS Status**
  - **Increase in "Purple" Operations**

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Other Issues

- ✓ Construction Verification
- ✓ Acceptance of Risk
- ✓ Deviations
- ✓ Inspections
- ✓ Proposed Rotations Between ES Service Centers

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Conclusion

- ✓ Coordination
- ✓ Consistency
- ✓ Trust